

ACTION

OLL 84-1353

**Office of Legislative Liaison**  
Routing Slip

TO:	ACTION	INFO
1. D/OLL		X
3. DD/OLL		X
3. Admin Officer		
4. Liaison	X	
5. Legislation		
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SUSPENSE		5Apr84
		Date

Action Officer:	
Remarks:	answered <del>by</del> by DD #02111-84/1 10 apr

30Mar84  
Name/Date

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**EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT**  
**ROUTING SLIP**

TO:

		ACTION	INFO	DATE	INITIAL
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11	IG				
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15	D/PAO				
16	SA/IA				
17	AO/DCI				
18	C/IPD/OIS				
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SUSPENSE		5 April Date			

Remarks

Please prepare reply for  
DCI's signature.Executive Secretary  
29 March 84  
Date

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011 #
84-1353/1

**Record**

DDI #02111-84/1  
10 April 1984

**MEMORANDUM FOR:** Director of Central Intelligence

**THROUGH :** Deputy Director of Central Intelligence  
Executive Director  
Director, Office of Legislative Liaison

**FROM :** Deputy Director for Intelligence

**SUBJECT :** Letter from Senators on Soviet Defense Spending

1. In the attached letter on Senate Steering Committee stationery, six Republican Senators have written to express concern about NATO's estimates of Soviet defense spending --

2. SOVA and I have drafted a reply (also attached) for your signature to Senator Hatch on behalf of the others. The reply is based on the letter we wrote to the Washington Post last year with some additional unclassified detail. I believe that it is a good response.

3. The basic issue is whether you should respond at all. As you know better than I do, the Senate Steering Committee is a conservative Republican group of Senators that has no formal standing in the Congress as far as I know. Providing them a substantive reply could both set an unwelcome precedent and smack of involving ourselves in partisan issues. By the same token, it seems impolitic to ignore them.

4. I believe you should answer them but do so without reference to the Committee -- simply respond as if they had written you individually in keeping with their broad Senatorial responsibilities. I would address it to Senator Hatch as the first signatory and ask him to share it with the rest.

Robert M. Gates

**Attachments:** two  
As Stated

**CONFIDENTIAL**

CL By Signer  
DECL OADR

DDI #02111-84/1  
10 April 1984

**SUBJECT: Letter from Senators on Soviet Defense Spending**

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Central Intelligence Agency



Washington, D.C. 20505

18 APR 1984

The Honorable Orrin G. Hatch  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Orrin:

I appreciate the letter from you and your colleagues concerning NATO's estimates of Soviet defense costs, which closely parallel our own.

Before turning to your questions about those estimates, I want you to know that, in our view, the only reliable measures of Soviet military power and programs are those which assess the military capabilities of the forces they have in the field. These forces, as you are well aware, are extraordinarily powerful in terms of quantity, technical sophistication, and military capability. For example, over the last decade, the Soviets produced four to five times the number of ICBMs, three times as many submarines, twice the number of tactical aircraft, and four times as many tanks as the US acquired over the same period.

Our economic assessments of Soviet defense programs do not measure Soviet might but rather attempt to measure the annual flow of resources to military forces, the impact of that effort on the Soviet economy, and offer some insight into trends over time in overall allocations to defense and relative priorities among elements of the Soviet military. The dollar comparisons also are useful for illustrating some of the Soviet size advantages. For instance, over the last decade, estimated dollar costs for Soviet ICBMs were six times as large as US outlays; in the strategic defense area (ABM, SAMs, interceptors, control and warning systems) they were 15 times US outlays; and for SLBM programs exceeded US costs by 50 percent.

Unfortunately, the Intelligence Community's work on Soviet defense expenditures is often distorted in the press and differences among intelligence agencies exaggerated. Both CIA and DIA last year testified to the Joint Economic Committee of the Congress that the rate of growth of Soviet military procurement had declined. CIA went on to observe that the latest comparisons of US and Soviet defense programs show that despite somewhat slower growth in recent years the costs of Soviet defense activities still exceed those of the United States by a large margin. In 1981, the estimated dollar costs of Soviet

defense activities were 45 percent greater than US outlays; procurement costs -- where we have seen the most significant slowing of growth -- were also 45 percent larger. Moreover, we reminded the Committee that Soviet defense effort still is running between 13 and 14 percent of GNP -- that is, well over twice the percentage of GNP devoted to defense spending in the United States.

You should know that we also stressed to the Committee that trends in Soviet military spending, as I noted above, are not a sufficient basis to form judgments about Soviet military capabilities, which are a complex function of weapons stocks, doctrine, training, generalship and other factors important in a general conflict. The cost estimates are best used to identify shifts in priorities and trends in resource commitments to military programs over an extended period of time. Moreover, and particularly important, the spending estimates do not give an appreciation of the large stocks of strategic and conventional weapons systems already deployed. Indeed, current levels of spending are so high that despite the procurement plateau we have observed, Soviet forces have received since 1975 about 2,000 ICBMs and SLBMs, over 5,000 tactical combat or interceptor aircraft, 15,000 tanks and substantial numbers of major surface combatants SSBNs and attack submarines.

Finally, it is worth pointing out that Soviet efforts to develop advanced weapons systems continue in the 1980s at least at the rapid pace of the previous two decades. Among these are fighter and airborne control aircraft, ballistic and cruise missiles, space systems and submarines. The new systems cover the full range of technologically advanced weaponry the Soviets will need to modernize all forces. At the same time, we see continued growth in floor space of Soviet factories for the production of such weapons.

These developments would seem to suggest a return to the historical rates of growth is imminent; certainly the Soviets are putting in place the elements to make this possible. On the other hand, if technical and economic problems are important causes of the slowdown, they would have to be resolved before the Soviets can return to the historical rate of growth or more.

I hope that the above information is responsive to the concerns of you and your colleagues and that you will share it with them. We would be happy to discuss this with any of you at your convenience.

Sincerely,



William J. Casey  
Director of Central Intelligence